

Doremus House  
Towaco, Morris County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-488

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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Doremus House  
Towaco, Morris County, New Jersey

Owner: Smith W. Jacobus

Date of Erection: Before 1775

Architect:

Builder: A member of the Doremus family

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: One and one-half

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - stone,  
gables frame, frame  
addition of later date  
in rear

Interior walls - plaster

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch

Historical Data:

At present this house is owned by the Jacobus family. Smith W. Jacobus got the property from his father Wilson Jacobus who bought it in 1854 from William De Graw. De Graw received title two years before from Horatio Huntington who obtained the property from Elizabeth Doremus and others in 1850. Elizabeth Doremus was the second wife of Captain Thomas Doremus who must have received it through some family arrangement, for

Cornelius Doremus in his will sworn to in 1791 and filed in 1803 left all his real estate except fifty acres to his son Henry. The fifty acres were to be sold and the money divided among his children of whom Thomas was one. However, it is logical to assume that the rest of the children were provided for in some way other than that indicated by the will.

Miss Bailey calls this house the Henry Doremus House. She thinks that it is the one marked on Erskine's map as Henry Doremus and which served as one of Washington's Headquarters. In doing this she assumes that it was sold by Henry to his brother Thomas. Mr. Philip R. Van Dyne, a lawyer in Newark, who has searched the land titles in this section and whose grandfather John R. Van Dyne owned the farm to the north of this property which he now owns together with the Fred W. Cook Farm which is to the east of this property, recalls that his grandfather said there were two Doremus houses on this road rather close together and that both were used as taverns. It may be that the tavern that Henry Doremus was supposed to have kept at his father's farm at Wechaw during the Revolution was the one since destroyed. However, it is just as reasonable to assume in the light of the will of Cornelius and also from the fact that there is a house marked Cornelius Doremus on Erskine's map standing on the south side of the road, that Henry occupied this house and that Thomas received it after his father died when Henry took over his father's house. Mr. Van Dyne also claims that Cornelius Doremus obtained the land from John Jacobus in 1719 and that the original grant was made to Kirkbride and others in 1714-1715. The latter part of this contention we know is correct and we also know from an old survey that John Jacobus owned the land east of this farm which is at present owned by Mr. Van Dyne; this seems to lend some support to Mr. Van Dyne's contentions. However, Miss Bailey says there is no deed for the Towaco farm of Cornelius and we have not seen it personally. It may be that the Cornelius Mr. Van Dyne claims bought from John Jacobus was the father of the Cornelius mentioned above who was born in 1714 and died 1803.

This locality was originally called Doremustown. The first Doremus came to New Jersey and settled at what is now East Paterson in 1708. We know one son of the first Doremus settled near Cedar Grove about 1747 when he bought a tract of seven hundred and twenty-seven acres. We also know that he deeded one-third of this tract to a son Golyn and the other two-thirds to his sons Abraham and John. Miss Bailey thinks that there was another son Cornelius and that he settled at Towaco. A Cornelius Doremus married in 1733 Antjn Young, a daughter of Peter Young of Te Wechaw, and settled on a large farm east of Montville. Thus he was married and apparently settled nine years before the purchase was made by Thomas at Cedar Grove. Miss Bailey thinks Cornelius is a son of this Thomas, but this may not be so. In his will sworn to in 1791 Cornelius called himself a resident of "Pequanack". This was the name then applied to the southeast corner of Morris County near the Pequannock and Passaic Rivers.

#### Bibliography:

Bailey, Rosalie F. Pre-Revolutionary Dutch Houses and Families in Northern New Jersey and Southern New York New York, William Horrow and Company, 1936

Information from Mr. Philip R. Van Duyno, lawyer of Newark

A search of Morris County records by Frank P. Caulfield, Essex County Office

A search of records in the Secretary of State's office at Trenton by Robert H. Falcoy, Mercer County Office

Walter E. Pratt  
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Approved:

Seymour Williams  
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